



California Public Utilities Commission
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**CPUC ADVANCES BROADBAND
AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESS IN CALIFORNIA**

SAN FRANCISCO, June 8, 2023 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in an ongoing commitment to help the state bridge the digital divide, today made three decisions that advance broadband affordability and access in underserved communities.

The CPUC approved two pilot programs for the [California LifeLine Program](#) that leverage the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) to enhance affordable broadband services offered to low-income Californians. The California LifeLine Program provides discounted home phone and cell phone services to qualified households. The ACP is a federal program that provides a discount of up to \$30 per month for broadband services to qualifying households and a discount of \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. The two pilots – one for wireline broadband services and one for wireless broadband services – enable service providers to combine the California LifeLine and ACP subsidies. Pilot participants may access up to \$57.15 (and up to \$127.15 on Tribal lands) of combined federal and state support for standalone broadband service or bundled broadband and voice service plans. The pilots test whether the California LifeLine can leverage federal programs to support new types of services, increase program participation, and offer higher-quality services than would otherwise have been possible.

“These two pilot programs will provide synergies between the California LifeLine and the federal Affordable Connectivity Programs for low-income households to receive long-awaited high-quality broadband, hot spots, and voice options. The programs will support getting homework done, applying for jobs and resources, access to telemedicine, and much more,” said Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma, who is assigned to the proceeding.

“This decision allows California LifeLine subscribers to leverage the Federal Communications Commission’s Affordable Connectivity Program for improved wireless and wireline service. The wireless pilot programs will offer improvements relative to current LifeLine offerings, which we hope will improve participation in both the LifeLine program and the Affordable Connectivity Program,” said Commissioner Darcie L. Houck.

“The pilot programs will provide more high-speed broadband and communications options to California’s income-qualified subscribers, while collecting data to ensure LifeLine funds are used effectively,” said Commissioner Karen Douglas.

The proposal voted on is available at docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M510/K542/510542249.PDF.

Separately, the CPUC approved grant funding of approximately \$951,000 from the [California Advanced Services Fund](#) Broadband Public Housing Account for 14 projects from five applicants. The projects will deploy both wireless and wireline broadband infrastructure for 830 living units in these publicly supported housing developments. The deployment of broadband infrastructure that provides free internet access in low-income communities furthers the state’s goal to increase broadband affordability, access, and digital equity in communities with limited broadband adoption.

“I am happy to see that these funds will support 14 public housing projects supporting low-income families and individuals participating in our state’s growing economy that relies so heavily on these basic internet technologies to thrive,” said Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma.

“Broadband is not accessible if it is not available to use in your home, or if you are unable to afford to connect at useful speeds. These awards will help in addressing both the availability and affordability challenges to accessing broadband by supporting public housing developments in bringing free, fast internet to some of California’s most vulnerable customers,” said Commissioner Darcie L. Houck.

The proposal voted on is available at docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M510/K286/510286508.PDF.

Lastly, the CPUC approved a Local Agency Technical Assistance grant of up to \$938,206 for the Hoopa Valley Public Utilities District (HVPUD) to fund environmental and biological studies; develop a fiber-to-the-home network design; develop a business feasibility study; and generate rules, regulations, and legal documents. These work products will assist the HVPUD in bringing fiber-to-the-home-based broadband service to unserved and underserved locations in the Willow Creek area that will reliably meet or exceed 100 Mbps symmetrical upload and download speeds.

“The grant funding for the Hoopa Valley Public Utilities District will fund the environmental and biological studies to support a fiber-to-the-home network design, essential for eventual deployment to Tribal homes. I am pleased to support the Hoopa Tribe’s efforts to bridge the digital divide,” said Commissioner Genevieve Shiroma.

“I am pleased with the Local Agency Technical Assistance funds awarded to support Tribal entities, here the Hoopa Valley Municipal Utility District with its plan to expand broadband service to under and unserved communities within its aboriginal territories. This is one example of collaboration and coordination between Tribal and state sovereigns as we work to close the digital divide across California,” said Commissioner Darcie L. Houck.

The proposal voted on is available at docs.cpuc.ca.gov/PublishedDocs/Published/G000/M510/K542/510542271.PDF.

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